

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-15 /068 W

-----125242 071106Z /13

R 070905Z SEP 77

FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6654

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL CAPETOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

UNCLAS JOHANNESBURG 2378

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SF

SUBJECT: PRP AND BASSON FACTION FORM NEW POLITICAL PARTY

1. SOUTH AFRICA'S NEWEST OPPOSITION PARTY, THE PROGRESSIVE FEDERAL PARTY (PFP) WAS BORN IN JOHANNESBURG YESTERDAY (SEPTEMBER 5) FOLLOWING THE MERGER OF THE OLD PROGRESSIVE REFORM PARTY (PRP) AND THE BASSON FACTION OF THE NEW DEFUNCT UNITED PARTY. COLIN EGLIN, LEADER OF THE PRP, WAS RETAINED AS LEADER OF THE NEW PARTY, WITH JAPPIE BASSON ELECTED DEPUTY NATIONAL CHAIRMAN.

2. THE MERGER WAS ACCOMPLISHED SMOOTHLY, WITH THE BASSONITES ADOPTING THE PRP PLATFORM VIRTUALLY INTACT. THE MAJOR ISSUE OF THE DAY WAS WHETHER THE NEW POLITICAL COALITION SHOULD ADOPT A NEW NAME OR RETAIN ITS PROGRESSIVE REFORM HEADING. THE ISSUE WAS RESOLVED IN FAVOR OF A NEW NAME - AS A GESTURE DESIGNED TO IMPLY THAT THE NEW GROUPING WAS BROADER BASED IN ITS APPEAL THAN THE OLD PRP.

3. IN HIS KEYNOTE ADDRESS AFTER BEING ELECTED LEADER OF THE PFP, COLIN EGLIN SPELLED OUT THE PRINCIPLES OF THE NEW PARTY (REPORTED BY AIRGRAM), INCLUDING A PROPOSED NEW CONSTITUTION AND BILL OF

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RIGHTS LOOSELY FASHIONED AFTER THE U.S., AND A CALL FOR POWER SHARING.

4. COMMENT: REMARKS FROM HELEN SUZMAN, HARRY SCHWARTZ AND OTHERS OF THE OLD PRP INDICATED THE MAJOR CONCERN OF THE PRP GOING INTO MERGER TALKS I.E. WHETHER THE BASSONITES WOULD ACCEPT THE PLATFORM OF THE PRP WITHOUT MAJOR MODIFICATION, DID NOT EMERGE

AS A PROBLEM. IN FACT, SUZMAN SAID MERGER WAS EASIER THAN EARLIER
MERGER OF PROGRESSIVE AND REFORM PARTIES LEADING TO THE PRP.
ESSENCE OF NEW PARTY IS STILL PRP, BUT ADDITION OF BASSON CON-
TINGENT GIVES PFP 18 SEATS IN PARLIAMENT, STILL BEHIND THE NEW
REPUBLIC PARTY (THE OTHER WING OF THE DEFUNCT UP) WITH 23.
JOHNSON

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Message Attributes

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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 07-Sep-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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